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Title: Regarding closure of Post Offices in rural areas and opening up of Private franchise centres.

DR. K.S. MANOJ (ALLEPPEY): Sir, I rise to make a submission on a very important matter regarding closure of post offices in the rural areas and opening up of private franchise centres.

Indian Postal Services has completed 150th year of existence in the country. In the rural areas, post offices form the mainstay of communications among the rural poor even in this era of information and communication revolution. Postal savings bank also provides banking facilities in the rural areas. Post offices form one of the hallmarks of national integrity network. But the government has closed down or merged several post offices in the country.

More than 38,000 regular posts and 20,000 posts of ED employees were abolished, thus weakening the functioning of post offices in the country. The Government has given secret directions to the Chief Post Master-Generals to open up private franchise centres. One hundred such centres are going to be opened in the country including three such centres in Kerala. No private franchise provides services in the rural areas. One cannot be blamed, if one thinks that the post offices are closed in order to facilitate the private entrepreneurs. Post offices are profit making units, if the profits out of the postal savings and postal insurance are taken together. As per the Common Minimum Programme, no profit making unit should be privatized. So, this is a violation of the Common Minimum Programme. So, I urge upon the Government to review the decision to close down the post offices and to open private franchise centres. [MSOffice79]